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Lists of Works

Ali Ahadi
An Ideological Question About the Fifth Type of Subject That Is Induced By An Amorous Encounter, And Now The Machinic Subject, 2013
Mix media
137cm x 140cm x 40cm
Courtesy of the artist

Abbas Akhavan
Ghost, 2013
Video
32:00
Courtesy of the artist

Amir Ali Ghassemi
Meeting Her Online, 2013
Video
5:32
Courtesy of the artist

Sohrab Kashani
The Adventures of Super Sohrab, 2013
Video
4:27
Courtesy of the artist

Gelare Khoshgozaran
Speech, 2013
Video
5:45
Courtesy of the artist

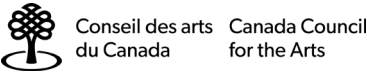
Tala Madani
Eye Stabber, 2013
1:35
Under Man, 2013
00:23
Music Man, 2013
1:30
Video
Courtesy of Pilar Corias Gallery

Reza Negarestani
Abducting the Outside: Modernity and the Culture of Acceleration
Audio, 2012
2:35:00
2 Diagrams, 2012
30” x 25”
Courtesy of Reza Negarestani and Miguel Abreu Gallery

Raha Raissnia
Chaleh Harz, 2013
Video
9:06
Courtesy of Miguel Abreu Gallery

Anahita Razmi
A Tale of Tehrangeles, 2013
Video
Variable Time
Courtesy of the artist

Nooshin Rostami
Every Piece in an iPhone, 2013
Mix Media
Courtesy of the artist



Navigate With Extreme Prejudice (Definitions and Ramifications)

Reza Negarestani

- Traditionally, philosophy is an ascetic cognitive experimentation in abstract (general) intelligence. In the broadest sense, it is simultaneously a rigorous program of abstraction and a platform for automation of discursive practices whose mission is to arrive at what came to be known to Greeks as *logoi* or truths. The aim of philosophy is entering the game of truths and developing a necessary game-bias (being true to the game). But this is not a game in the sense of playfulness and conforming to a whim. It is a game insofar as it is a rule-based exercise without a referee in which some rules can be revised through practices and some cannot. Reason is simply a name for these normative rules which are neither natural laws nor socio-cultural conventions. The activity of following, assessing and unlocking spaces of these norms is called reasoning. In this sense, philosophy inevitably coincides with a thoroughgoing project of disenchantment whose telos lies in the functional autonomy or the self-actualizing propensity of reason - a scenario wherein reason liberates its own spaces *regardless* of what appears to be naturally or culturally necessary or *the case*.

- According to the above definition, the first task of philosophy is to locate an access or a space of entry to the universal landscape of *logoi*. In short, philosophy's first task is the localization of a site from which *logoi* can be approached. Localization constitutes the first commitment of the philosopher in the game of truths. As a commitment that encapsulates certain choices of progression and orientation, localization also decides later commitments and entitlements (the 'what else?' of an initial commitment). Since in the game of truths, nothing - neither the generic landscape nor a particular place in it - should be taken as a given, localization of a site proper to truth is a matter of a specific form of organization. This organization is conducted by way of a controlled de-homogenization of a homogenous informational landscape (a landscape that neither faces toward the subject nor wants to tell a story) in order to excite a qualitative opportunity and permit further organization. In other words, 'to locate' or 'to determine a place' is a matter of distinguishing, demarcating and organizing a place in an otherwise desert-like landscape where everything seems to be one and the same, and therefore, no move, no navigational commitment toward *logoi* can be made.¹

- Localization is the constitutive gesture of conception and the first move in navigating spaces of reason. 'To localize' means 'to conceive' the homogenous and quantitative information into qualitatively well-organized information-spaces endowed with different modalities of

access. This qualitative process of 'conceiving' characterizes the labor of conception and links the rational agency (an agency that behaves according to a representation of a rule) to logoi. The navigable link between the rational agency and logoi through spaces of reason marks the horizon of knowledge. Just as the concept is a qualitatively well-organized information-space, a local site, furnished with modalities of access, knowledge is a system of navigation of concept-spaces endowed with a universal orientation. To know is to conform to rules of navigation on concept-spaces. Accordingly, knowing is a compulsion which is no longer natural but normative. It depicts a certain form of deportment arising not from conformity to natural laws but from compliance to representation of rational norms and their demands. Whilst the former describes what natural impulsions are, the latter typifies conceptual compulsion as the drive of knowledge. This is a form of compulsion that is error-tolerant, orientational and revisionary, that is to say, capable of revising itself. It is the revisionary vector - supported by error-tolerant norms and various navigational strategies - that turns rationality into a perpetual struggle that posits itself as the veritable model of freedom, a constructive practice of maintaining and enhancing liberty within normative constraints.

- In line with the universality of logoi, knowledge must also maintain a universal orientation within the plastic bounds of reason. Indeed the universal orientation of knowledge as a system of navigation demands devising customized strategies for synthesizing particular and generic instances, oscillating between local-to-global and global-to-local spaces and bringing conceptual maps with different elevations into a telescopic coherence. It is forbidden to regard the behavior of the concept as always identical, flatten the status of different concepts (relativize them) and mix up various extensions or maps of the concept with one another. The local site of knowledge cannot be overextended to the universal landscape of logoi (dogmas - whether conceptual or metaphysical - are mostly expressions of inflating or over-extending the local to the global). Nor can different local sites or conceptual maps be stretched or simply added to one another in a pluralistic fashion (the risk of conceptual conflation, trivialization and anti-universality). Different strategies of navigation and integration of conceptual maps are required in order to maintain a universal orientation and non-trivially participate in the game of truths.

- Realized by different strategies of navigation, the universal orientation presents knowledge and by extension philosophy as platforms for breaking free from the supposedly necessary determinations of local horizons in which the rational agency appears to be firmly anchored. The 'unanchoring or deracinating effect' of a navigation equipped with a universal orientation becomes a condition of enablement for philosophy with regard to the choice of commitments (assertional, inferential, referential) and their import in the game of truths (*how far a set of*

commitments can Sgo and where does it lead to?). In other words, without this unanchoring effect, philosophy is incapable of examining any commitment beyond its local implications or envisaging the trajectory of reason outside of immediate resources. Philosophy analyzes commitments by examining what other commitments they lead to (diligently unpacking entitlements pertinent to commitments). In doing so, it either decomposes a complex commitment to its constituents or bootstraps a simple commitment to a complex one that demands the liberation of new abilities for it to be mobilized. To this extent, philosophy gauges the import of commitments by taking them to their ultimate conclusions through both deductive and abductive modes of reasoning. Correspondingly, philosophy operates as a virtual machine for forecasting future commitments and presenting a blueprint for a necessary course of action. It discursively sees into the future. In short, philosophy is but a slightly outdated albeit still useful nomenclature for a universal simulation engine. It is inside this simulation engine that the self-actualization of reason is anticipated, the escape plan from localist myopias is hatched and the self-portrait of man drawn in the sand is exposed to relentless waves of revision. In setting up the game of truths by way of giving functions of reason their own autonomy - in effect envisioning and practicing their automation - philosophy establishes itself as the paradigm of the Next (computational) Machine, back from the future.

- Not only reason is able to proceed regardless of its connection to natural laws but also its regime of normative causes should be distinguished from that of natural causes. The combination of these two facts should be taken as the first indication of reason's potential for automation. Succinctly speaking, the autonomy of reason implies the automation of conduct according to reason. If we object that reason is rooted in biological and physical domains (i.e. natural laws) and for this reason, the autonomy of reason is untenable, then we must also hold that the conceptual compulsion is bound by natural impulses (by virtue of the assertional commitment we have just made). Moreover, we can even claim that it is possible to define a complex inference or an advanced mathematical concept as well as its relations to other concepts simply by way of decomposing it to its biological roots. A claim that soon appears to be extremely precarious. The second objection against the autonomy of reason is by way of advocating a mixed-level entanglement between physical-biological and normative-conceptual horizons (cf. Giuseppe Longo). In order to adhere to this position, one should be able to exactly specify the levels which constitute the mixture in order to avoid the conceptual conflation arising from upholding a generic conception of mixture that inevitably leads to confusing different explanatory, functional and structural levels. Once the levels of the mixture are specified, we should also be able to distinguish different concepts and their pragmatic roles on the basis of their specific levels of entanglement with physical and biological domains. Again, this will prove a precarious task that is only feasible

by resorting to conceptual conflation and the over-extension of one explanatory level to another without taking into account their discontinuities and specific constraints. The third alternative would be that rational norms are conditioned by physical and biological laws via evolutionary processes but they function independently and their normative status cannot be explained in terms of their evolutionary conditioning (cf. William Lawvere). This alternative is indeed not incompatible with the ultimate autonomy of reason anticipated by the game of truths. Reason is not the law itself but the conception of the law, in other words, it is the logic of rules and not rules themselves, it is the function not the full chain of causes. Reason is neither separated from natural laws nor is it isolated from social construction, but nevertheless it is responsible for itself, it is defined by its own irreducible needs and can only be assessed by itself. The autonomy and the automation of reason respectively lie in the asymptotic autonomy and extractability of its function. The automation of reason, accordingly, originates from the capacity of its normative function for autonomous deployment. Automation here refers not to iteration but a bootstrapping of primitive abilities to complex ones. This bootstrapping proceeds in accordance with norms, it does not proceed in spite of them. While the latter ('proceeding in spite of norms') defines iteration as a mechanistic form of symbol-manipulation, the former ('proceeding in accordance with norms') outlines automation as a *ramifying procedure*, which is the programming schema of the next machine.

Notes:

1. It is helpful to point out that philosophy often commits to different modalities of site or local space of entry to logoi at the same time. For example, it conducts its procedures through the topos of the concept (conception), envisions its larger scale impacts through the local terrestrial horizon (geophilosophical commitments) and concretely effectuates itself through the site of the self (ethical commitments). For Greeks and Romans, the exercise of freedom and the procedural approach toward logoi were essentially parts of the commitment to the latter i.e. the site of the self. Philosophers ought not to exercise any influence on others unless and until they exercise an administrative care, or more precisely, organization of the self: In order to break free from any mode of slavery whether rooted in impulsions and desires or social and political dominations, philosophers have to care for themselves. But in order to care for themselves, they have to know themselves (*know thyself*). To know themselves, they have to treat themselves as hypotheses, that is to say, fallible or error-tolerant objects of understanding-via-construction and experimentation. Self, accordingly, is revealed to be what is constructed and organized in the process, and nothing else. Therefore, the local site is defined and acted upon without recourse to any foundation, allegedly necessary nature or original identity. Localization qua organization of the self: Care for yourself → Know yourself → Treat and construct yourself as a hypothesis.

“For one hundred years, hordes of finite sequences of signs with no signification have haunted the spaces of the foundations of mathematics and cognition and indeed the spaces of rationality. Rules, which are finite sequences of finite sequences of signs as well, transform these sequences into other sequences with no signification. Perfect and certain, they are supposed to transform the rational into the rational and stand as a paradigm of rationality, since human rationality is in machines. ‘Sequence-matching’ reigns undisputed: when a sequence of meaningless signs matches perfectly with the sequence in the premise of one of the rules (the first at hand, like in Turing machines), it is transformed into its logic-formal consequences, the sequence in the next line; this is the mechanical-elementary step of computation and of reasoning. This step is certain since it is ‘out of us’; its certainty does not depend on our action in the world, it is due to its potential or effective mechanizability.”¹

“So lets enunciate the problem of considering what is the impact of such a machine on the construction of knowledge. The machine is indeed not neutral; it imposes upon one who uses it a history and a logic, an organizing view of phenomena. The most deleterious cultural attitudes are of those who remain naïve before the novelty brought on by evolution and history (or that we bring into it): not knowing how to live according to our own knowledge, not knowing how to appreciate the originality of our own knowledge, and projecting our latest invention onto the past, as if, while rich in human history, it was already in the world, or if it were an accurate image of it.”²

—Giuseppe Longo

Exit and Exile: Telecomputation and Emerging Art from the Iranian Diaspora

Mohammad Salemy

A specter is haunting the space of knowledge – the specter of *telecomputation*. Unlike the modern age when scientific authority and the idea of objectivity were typically embodied in concrete objects like atlases, encyclopedias, books and photographs, the materiality and credibility of human knowledge in the contemporary moment is determined to a great extent by the gathering and sharing, as well as the algorithmic processing and visualization of digital data. This new space has been materialized by the technical synthesis of mass telecommunication and mass computation, enabling a new kind of collective production of knowledge unseen in human history.³

One can argue that all media, including those typical to visual art, have always operated by preserving human ephemerality into different forms of accessible memory. However, the global network of computers has transformed the idea of knowledge by stretching the theory and practice of mediation to their limits; through flattening past, present and future into the same temporal plane, it is revolutionizing media's function as prosthetic memory, generating a univocal, multidimensional, omnipresent and seemingly infinite space for the proliferation of real-time knowledge. Telecomputation differs qualitatively from either telecommunication or computation since the space it engenders constantly expands through persistent and collective human interaction. If technological progress is the externalized continuation of biological evolution in its Lamarckian sense, if the history of technology and human civilization was from the start the story of the separation of *things* from *beings*, then telecomputation is the space where the dead and the living, the mechanical and the biological, and, essentially, the *technic* and the *ethnic* are cataclysmically fast forwarding to the past and reuniting to start a new natural life.

The fact that every person, object or particular set of data in this international grid of intelligent machines⁵ is not available equally to everyone should not prevent it from being imagined as an integrated space.⁶ By augmenting the possibilities and limitations of human cognition, networked computers are constituting an autonomous spatial intensity that simultaneously mimics and rivals what has been known in phenomenology as the lifeworld.⁷ It is not that fragments of material culture, once digitized and shared as insensible informational matter, suddenly become flush with vitality, but that the continuous movement of data between nature, humans and machines cannot but appear complex, organic, alive and perhaps even rational. This technological short circuit between culture and nature via telecomputation has had, or will have, irreversible rami-

fications for science, the humanities, art and philosophy. As a cross between a scientific and an industrial revolution, the development of networked computers is putting humans on a trajectory whose origins, current shape and future direction require further contemplation.

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It was largely to investigate the genesis of telecomputation that in 2011, I organized *Nature, Knowledge and the Knower*, an exhibition of physical and digital materials from the archives of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).⁸ Using methods associated with media archeology, the exhibition traced a particular prehistory for today's computerized system of knowledge within the Museum's early 20th century exhibition practices. I showed how the conceptualization of habitat dioramas as a new mode of display at AMNH anticipated the emergence of today's interactive information systems. These resonances were highlighted through a comparison of the way James L. Clark and other museum artists collected data and constructed models from the world with how some of the pioneers in the field of cybernetics, namely Alan Turing, Norbert Weiner, and J.C.R. Licklider, set out the foundations of information theory and computer sciences in the postwar era. While working on this project, I began researching two new and related topics. On the one hand, I wanted to know how diasporic Iranian artists were utilizing networked computing not just as a new productive tool but further as the object and subject of their work. On the other, I was concerned with the larger ontological and epistemological ramifications of what I began to refer to as telecomputation.

The investigation of the space of networked computers is particularly relevant to a discussion of the Iranian diaspora, and Iranian artists, for several reasons. Firstly, the Iranian government has had a complicated geopolitical relationship with open computer networks, consistently using all means, including modern networked technologies themselves, to moderate its citizens' access to the Internet. As with the precarious integration of video and satellite into Iran's media landscape, the non-stop chase between the authorities, committed to governing access, and those intent on bypassing the state's boundaries has transformed networked computers into hyperpolitical objects.

Secondly, even before the arrival of the Internet, decades of emigration out of Iran had created one of the largest and most widely scattered global communities from the Middle East.⁹ Since the early 1980s, this network has been involved in developing its own scientific, political and cultural life across all continents. More importantly, it has sustained new forms of knowledge different from what has been officially endorsed by the Iranian state. The arrival of personal computers and the Internet only strengthened the Iranian diaspora, providing additional hardware for connecting its members with each

other and their relatives, friends and colleagues still living and working in Iran.

Further, the flourishing of Persian blogs in the first decade of this century enabled young Iranians to quickly grasp the significance of networked computers and use them as a means of sharing works and communicating ideas outside the state sanctioned spaces of information exchange.¹⁰ Having always been produced by and for a global audience, and using both Farsi and English, the development of Iranian blogging also documents how a rhizomatic cultural production responded to the tensions inherent to shaping a specific national identity within a global context. Overall, the structure of the Iranian diaspora is gradually transforming the production of knowledge by Iranians from a local project into a global process, one only partially embedded in Iran and marginally concerned with a fixed Iranian identity. Regardless of the insistence of institutions and individuals for whom the tangibility of Iranian identity translates into a higher margin of social and political power, the essence of Iranian culture today is no longer purely Iranian. Telecomputation, for better or worse, is making it increasingly difficult to speak about or identify core characteristics of contemporary Iranian culture without risking stereotypes.

Meanwhile, not only Iranian artists have not been exempt from the effects of an electronically networked diaspora but taking part in the world of international contemporary art has involved them in an even more intense engagement with intelligent machines than other sectors of the larger Iranian world. For one thing, in a political environment in which the government actively works to limit Iran's cultural exchanges with the rest of the world, the traffic of artistic production between Iran and institutions abroad would have been next to impossible without networked computers. In the absence of national or international institutions whose mandate is to support contemporary Iranian art, the Internet in and of itself has become an institutional space for facilitating contact and creating resources for Iranian artists regardless of their place of residence. These developments have on the one hand contributed to the international promotion of Iranian art but, on the other hand, are helping Iranian contemporary art to gradually break out of its culturally specific concerns and begin addressing universal themes and subjects.

Encyclonospace Iranica centres on new media for several reasons. The end of the decade-long slowdown in the production and circulation of modern art in Iran during the 1980s, which had begun with the 1979 revolution and continued during the Iran-Iraq war, coincided with the emergence of new media practices in global contemporary art. This shift made new media attractive to younger Iranian artists who were emerging during the 1990s. Cultural production by Iranian artists was also vectored by the international recognition of Iranian cinema in the same decade, further detaching artistic practices from traditional media and orienting them instead towards photogra-

phy and video. Even though the popularity of short film format as a medium dates back to the pre-revolutionary days, the emergence of video as an accessible art form heightened the existing interest in narrative structure while synthesizing it with a desire to engage in experimental art making.

With the ascendancy of digital format as the meta-medium for the production of images, computers found their way into Iranian artists' studios where they quickly became used in all levels of production. What is notable, and perhaps different, about the way in which digital technologies were viewed and used by young Iranian artists is that for them, unlike their western colleagues or the older generation of Iranian artists, computers were not an alternative space for creativity but an originary place in which they were practicing their art for the first time. The virtuality offered by networked computers to these "digital native" artists wasn't a substitute for an already existing space for the free exchange of ideas, but a completely new environment in which they generated and exercised such freedoms.

Even today as the concepts of medium specificity and discursive art are sidelined and research-based practices become more prevalent among Iranian artists, networked computers seem to be having an even greater impact than before on their art. The diasporic artists, especially those who for political reasons are unable to visit Iran, use the Internet to get as close as possible to resources that were once only available to those who visited the country. Conversely, the artists who live and work inside Iran rely on networked computers to transcend geosocial limitations, using online resources to learn about the history of modern and contemporary culture, both western and global. They are happily bypassing the institutional or even intellectual gatekeepers that have historically controlled the flow of knowledge from the outside world.

As the intersection between the spaces of knowledge and power, political necessities associated with technological changes often spark the most significant transformations of human cognition. These changes sooner or later spark new epistemological attitudes. Part historical, part political, and part technical, the geographical necessities of the Iranian diaspora is putting young Iranian artists and thinkers in a specific position from which they can reflect on the nature of telecomputation.

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The collision between networked computers and human cognition on the one hand and the integration of machinic intelligence into all aspects of knowledge production on the other has been accompanied by the emergence of distinct positions in regards to the ontology of networked computers within the discourses of media studies and philosophy. The often-contradictory approaches taken by different scholars not only reflect methodological variances but also highlight political disparities and struggles of dif-

ferent magnitudes over the history of technology and its future place in human life.

The most descriptive approach to the subject of networked computing is exemplified by Lev Manovich's theories about new media and the digital humanities.¹¹ While accurately recounting the characteristics of these new modes of knowledge production, Manovich mainly celebrates their ascendancy and advocates their intensified use in scientific and cultural fields. Even though Manovich's contributions are immensely useful for painting an ontic picture of new tools and methodologies involved in the production of digital knowledge, for the most part they lack a deeper ontological insight into telecomputation and its cataclysmic impact on human cognition.

Another approach, associated with Bernard Stiegler's philosophy, places networked computers in a longer trajectory of temporal media objects dating back to cinema, the ultimate impact of which has been a widespread malaise whose symptoms are the industrialization of human cognition and proletarianization of consciousness.¹² By synthesizing Gilbert Simondon's understanding of technical objects with Adorno's and Horkheimer's notion of culture industry,¹³ Stiegler is able to show how attentional forms that emerged after photography have interrupted conventional ways through which older human technologies mediated the ephemeral process of individuation.

Others like Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, Jonathan Crary and Alexander R. Galloway have concentrated on the more immediate and politico-economic ramifications of telecomputation, arguing, one way or another, for a withdrawal from networked computers, which they consider to be capitalism's ultimate machine technology. For them, refusing to partake in digital networks is an essential part of a larger strategy for confronting the exploitative and authoritarian mechanisms of the post-Fordist information economy. Berardi describes the emergence of networked computers as a symptom of the rise of immaterial labour. He identifies the contemporary subject of capitalism as the 'cognocariat' – the producer of knowledge and the manipulator of symbols – and warns against speed as the essential characteristic of what he calls semiocapitalism, a totality without totalization; by centrifuging the souls at work out of a motionless body and placing them in a monstrous global mind, semiocapital, "puts neuro-psychic energies to work, submitting them to mechanistic speed, compelling cognitive activity to follow the rhythm of networked productivity".¹⁴ The fusion of capitalism and technology leads Crary to investigate sleep as the ultimate frontier of networked computers' expansion into human life.¹⁵ Tracing a trajectory that dates back to the 19th century, he shows how unplugging from machines of commodity and information exchange via sleep can offer humans a way to challenge the dominant political economy of 24/7 capitalism. Galloway, drawing on the philosophy of François Laruelle, articulates a broader and more philosophical critique of what he calls 'digitality', locating the roots of all things digital in the bifurcated understand-

ing of the world that began with Ancient Greek philosophy. For him, only a univocal and analogical mode of thought holds any emancipatory potentials for a shift away from the dominant telecomputational paradigm.¹⁶

Amidst this array of approaches, the work of Reza Negarestani, a young Iranian writer and philosopher, is becoming increasingly relevant to the question of technology by way of his contributions to the concept of technological acceleration.¹⁷ Negarestani draws influence from the British philosopher Nick Land, whose identification of capitalism with inhumanism and technological progress¹⁸ has been referred to as 'accelerationism'.¹⁹ However, unlike Land, he believes that capitalism's libidinal embrace of speed cannot alone generate a technologically-driven scientific revolution. For Negarestani, this can only materialize by the unleashing of the latent productive forces that are repressed by capital and through repurposing of the material resources of neoliberalism; only a change of focus from destroying the existing capitalist infrastructure to salvaging it as a platform for launching towards post-capitalism can liberate telecomputation from its self image that falsely identifies it with the capital's vulgar thirst for speed.

Building on the work of thinkers from various fields such as Gilles Chatelet (philosophy of science), Giuseppe Longo (mathematical logic and computer sciences), Fernando Zalamea (philosophy of mathematics), and Robert Brandom (philosophy of language and mind), Negarestani has proposed an alternative theory of modern epistemology based upon new understandings of reason, rationality, universality and freedom. For him, without the creative force of reason at the helm, the computational epistemology can only limit the horizon of knowledge. Computers' limitations stem from their iteration of finite logic and dependence on existing data for recognizing patterns and making predictions.²⁰ In contrast to computation, which approaches the world as a series of premeasured objects constructed of data, Negarestani's modern system of knowledge is concerned more with the question of, "*where rather than what*."²¹ For him, knowledge, instead of constructing objects, is preoccupied with moving and expanding in its own geometry. Negarestani sees knowledge as a rule-based and navigational abyss whose geometrical space is constituted by the careful gestures of creative thought. This process involves tarrying with contingency and advancing without preconditioned grounds. More importantly, Negarestani's concept of modern epistemology depends more on abductive than inductive reasoning and the use of what he has identified as extreme hypotheses.²² Gestures towards movement in the space of knowledge are game-like and rule-based and therefore have irreversible ramifications for the future; each move unlocks certain possibilities for thought as it limits or forecloses others.

The strength of Negarestani's approach to the epistemological possibilities and limitations of computers is that it allows a distinction to be drawn between local and global knowledge, opening the space for an attitude

that neither wholeheartedly rejects nor fully embraces telecomputation. According to Negarestani, the spatializing movement that produces modern epistemology is partially dependant on interconnections made by humans while navigating within the natural and worldly horizon of knowledge. Whilst this *local* routing can and perhaps must involve computational processes, a natural reliance on machines and mechanical procedures has the potential to limit the contingent nature of conceptual movement and discovery in the *global* space of knowledge. As Negarestani notes: “we have to seek alternatives for producing intelligibility not through computational iteration but by way of developing new conceptual frameworks for a non-iterative recursive theory.”²³ According to Alex Williams, one of the authors of the *#accelerate Manifesto*:

“This revolution ‘for and by the open’ prioritizes neither the global over the local nor the local over the global, but rather their imbrication with one another, their potential for perforation, and their possibilities for transplantation or transition. Considered from the perspective of an epistemological account of conceptual space, this is to operate under the rational injunction towards exploration, albeit of a necessarily traumatic kind.”

For Negarestani, computers are potentially capable of mapping out the metaphysical categories of body and soul, the realms of the social, political historical and cultural, as well as the scientific notions of the physical, biological and psychological. However, outside of this worldly, phenomenological and immanent space, he sees the existence of an autonomous and infinite cosmos open to formal reasoning: not grounded in the self-interested human but opened out onto the selfless inhuman.²⁵ By conceptualizing a new purpose for reason and asserting its command, Negarestani is able to destabilize the computational mechanics that limit knowledge to a calculated circulation of nature into culture. He insists that formal human reason alone, apart from nature and the feedback loops involving observational instruments, can break the vicious circle formed between nature, man and machine, putting them back on a path towards the open:

“Computational machines cannot embrace the global structure of knowledge and develop a navigation with universal orientation. Sophisticated computational methods like quantum computation, cellular automata can produce – or more precisely, simulate – contingencies, critical states, etc. but only according to their own highly modified and ideologically consolidated causal and conceptual regimes, which have nothing to do with the physical universe and its principles of continuity and contingency. In this sense, computation does not render the universe intelligible, it produces a different form of intelligibility and even objectivity strictly corresponding to its own causal regime.”²⁶

Negarestani’s concept of the modern system of knowledge is an attempt to bridge the century old gap between analyti-

cal and continental philosophy through moving the field in a promising direction away from the works of the twentieth century's philosophers of the *lifeworld* and *being* like Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Although he has been compared to Laruelle and his project of non-philosophy as well as the wider spectrum of speculative realist thinkers, Negarestani in fact inhabits a unique position with a productive and nevertheless dialectical distance from both Laruelle's project, which problematizes Western metaphysics' age-old obsession with the earth-world double, and the speculative realists' fetishistic obsession with anti-correlation and the mysteries of 'withdrawn objects'. Negarestani's reintroduction of the concepts of freedom, universality, reason and, essentially, the enlightenment could be just what philosophy, the sciences and the arts need if they are to respond to the crisis of knowledge production in the age of telecomputation.

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Encyclonospace Iranica is anchored by Negarestani's talk concerning the problems of the computational system of knowledge titled *Abducting the Outside, Modernity and the Culture of Acceleration*, delivered at Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York on November 18th, 2012, an audio recording of which is included in the exhibition. This work is presented alongside two diagrams that Negarestani produced during the talk. In order to avoid the drawbacks of directly referring to a thinker, I have related the exhibition's main concerns to the content of Negarestani's thought and the place they occupy in the larger field of ideas. The artists were also invited to connect their own thinking about networked computers to those of Negarestani and offer new ways of insights about the natural, social and cognitive ramifications of telecomputation. The exhibition probes the possibility of utilizing artistic production not only to reveal the limitations of networked computers but also to think about how they may be tactically employed in order to be strategically circumvented.

To relate a set of local experiences to larger global thought procedures, I chose to work with artists who only share an oblique connection to Iran. In other words, although the cultural history of the participants does overlap with their work, it only rests in the background rather than the centre of their practice. I specifically wanted to work with those who avoid addressing an exclusive set of cultural identities as Iranians, artists whose works in the past have problematized the valorization of Iranian subjectivity *vis-a-vis* artistic practices that relate to tangible Middle Eastern cultural identities.²⁷ Iran serves the artists in the exhibition, as it does Negarestani, as no more than a point of departure for arriving at a universal problem whose elucidation benefit from their specific experiences as Iranians.

As a perplexing black box, *Encyclonospace Iranica* shows that the emergence of new critical and poetic approaches to current technologies has to intersect with analogue interfaces such as video and television. It reminds the

viewers that today's *children* of the Internet are by default the *grandchildren* of television. Thus, the space of knowing in the exhibition is constructed by returning to the domestic object of television both as the hardware for sustaining televisuality and as a particular medium that prepared humans across several generations for their seemingly eternal life of interaction with computer screens. The black space of the exhibition and the lucid screens as both the objects of gaze and the sources of light are a reference to the mysterious mechanism that goes on inside a computer and to the monitor as the user's only form of interface with most technological operations. The black interior of the gallery is also a reference to Negarestani's insistence on the abyssal quality of the space of knowledge, and to Laruelle's contention about the groundlessness of black and its priority to light as the substance of universe.²⁸

Group exhibitions of contemporary art often accommodate each artwork with a large amount of white space, allowing it to stand as the material evidence of a unique artistic subjectivity. In such a context, artists are often themselves paradoxical signs for the disappearance and persistence of individuality in a post-internet world supposedly composed of networked objects and subjects. By including a larger than usual number of artists and adopting an encyclopedic approach to the presentation of art in an intimate setting, *Encyclonospace Iranica* is shifting the emphasis away from singular subjectivities to a collective one. The staging of the exhibition highlights what Negarestani in a Facebook comment on October 10, 2013, suggests as the true meaning of inhumanism, "not as some sort of humiliation of human's significance against the backdrop of great outdoors" but as "a revisionary force against the canonical portrait of man" and "a consequence of committing to humanity (in the sense of what a commitment is and what human is combined)."

Notes:

1. Francic Bailly and Guiseppe Longo, *Mathematics and the Natural Sciences: The Physical Singularity of Life* (London: Imperial College Press, 2006), 59.
2. Giuseppe Longo, "Critique of Computational Reason in the Natural Sciences," last modified September 8, 2009, <http://www.di.ens.fr/users/longo>, (accessed August 12, 2013).
3. For more on the relationship between visual representation and scientific objectivity, see: Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007) 17.
4. In contrast to networked computers, which can be considered an interrelated group of objects, telecomputation is used in this text to refer to the space created by the proliferation and widespread use of networked digital technologies.
5. The integrated space of telecomputation includes phenomena such as crowdsourcing and the Internet of Things. Proposed by Kevin Ashton in 1999, The Internet of Things refers to uniquely identifiable objects and their virtual representations in an Internet-like structure. This concept first became popular through the Auto-ID Centre at MIT and related market analysts publications. Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is often seen as a prerequisite for the Internet of Things. If all objects and people in daily life were equipped with identifiers, they could be managed and inventoried by computers.
6. Two examples of this unfolding future, one utopian and the other one dystopian, were vividly predicted by H. G. Wells and E.M. Forster. See H.G. Wells, *World Brain* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1938), and E. M. Forster, *The Machine Stops* (London: Penguin 2011).
7. In *The Crisis of European Sciences* Husserl, in a break from his earlier description of phenomenology that was defined as an individual's consciousness of the given world, proposes the intersubjective concept of lifeworld: "In whatever way we may be conscious of the world as universal horizon, as coherent universe of existing objects, we, each 'I-the-man' and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; and the world is our world, valid for our consciousness as existing precisely through this 'living together.' We, as living in wakeful world-consciousness, are constantly active on the basis of our passive having of the world... Obviously this is true not only for me, the individual ego; rather we, in living together, have the world pre-given in this together, belong, the world as world for all, pre-given with this ontic meaning... The we-subjectivity... [is] constantly functioning." Alfred Schütz has used and expanded on the concept of lifeworld as the materially phenomenological basis of social intersubjectivity. He was interested in how the transcendental ego understood via the intersubjective everyday ego enters into a so-called blind dogmatic way of living in the world. See: Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences*, 108-109 and Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *Structures of the Life-World, Vol. 1* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 3-20.

8. Mohammad Salemy, *Nature, Knowledge and the Knower*, Last Modified October 23, 2011, <http://natureknowledgeknower.com>, (accessed August 12, 2013).
9. Shahab Dean Aslinia, *Iranian Immigrants in the United States: History, Migration Trends, Language, and Cultural Maintenance among Second Generation Iranian Immigrants* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008).
10. Niki Akhavan, *Electronic Iran: The Cultural Politics of an Online Evolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013).
11. Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* (New York: Blumsburry Publishing, 2013).
12. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2 Disorientation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 87-189.
13. T. W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), 242.
14. Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, "Cognitarian Subjectivation," last modified December 17, 2009, http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_8888183.pdf, (accessed September 5, 2013).
15. Jonathan Crary, *24/7, Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep* (New York: Verso, 2013).
16. Alexander R. Galloway, "Ten Theses on the Digital," last modified September 2012, <http://vimeo.com/48727142>, (accessed January 4, 2013).
17. Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia*, an underground literally classic whose genre he has described as theory fiction, incorporates the style of philosophical blogs and internet chat rooms to develop a mythical genealogy for the 21st century's petro-economy and the war on terror. Arguably, the book could have only been produced during the internet age. Indeed its production was facilitated by networked computers; Negarestani lived in Iran while writing the book and the book's editing and design were finalized over the Internet. See: Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia, Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: re:press, 2008).
18. Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007*, edited by Ray Brassier and Robin Mackay (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2011), 626.
19. Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 5.
20. Reza Negarestani, "Abducting the Outside: Modernity and the Culture of Acceleration," (Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, 2012).
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Negarestani, "Abducting the Outside (a summary of the talk, part 1)," November 23, 2013, http://blog.urbanomic.com/cyclon/archives/2012/11/abducting_the_o.html, (accessed September 5, 2013).
24. Alex Williams, "Escape Velocities," June 25, 2013, http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_8969785.pdf (accessed September 5, 2013).
25. Ray Brassier, Reza Negarestani and Suhail Malik, "Blow Your Mind: On Freedom and Enlightenment," (88 El-dridge Street, New York, 2013).
26. Negarestani, "Abducting the Outside (a summary of the talk, part 1)".

27. Gelare Khoshgozaran, "Nostaligia for a Past I Never Had," Parkett No. 91, 2012, (241-242).
28. François Laruelle, "Of Black Universe in the Human Foundations of Color," in the catalogue Hyun Soo Choi: *Seven Large-Scale Paintings* (New York: Thread Waxing Space, 1991): 2-4.

Ali Ahadi's sculptural installation consists of a bookshelf on top of which sits a flat screen monitor. However, unlike those found in typical living rooms, Ahadi's media console is turned around to face the wall, hiding the books' spines and instead exposing the back of the screen. In the small gap between the wall and the monitor, a mirror reflects the screen's bright red surface which reads: "Can maggots possibly pardon Assad?"

Overturning a typical household media console in this installation transports the viewers behind the scene, exposing them to the hidden parts of media apparatus. This shift raises questions about the vital role of interfaces in converting raw data into information. The work highlights the inherent dialectics between access and prohibition, and the circular processes of mediating and reflecting. It also speaks about the impossibility of the concept of data-democracy and universal access; only those capable of mobilizing large amounts of data and affording sophisticated algorithms can potentially have a meaningful relationship with vast amounts of information. In addition, the work identifies the ramifications of the dominant political economy of data through which cultural products of different qualities are flattened into the same ontological status and forced to abandon their specific spatiotemporal autonomy in favor of a ubiquitous terrain accessible only to experts. Ahadi's work cannot help but to function as a timely reference to the recent NSA spying revelations and their geopolitical consequences.

Ali Ahadi is a Vancouver-based writer and artist. He graduated from Azad University of Tehran with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2007 and completed his Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of British Columbia in 2012. In May of 2012, he participated in a solo exhibition at the grunt gallery titled *Here There Nowhere: Flaccid Means Without End*. In September 2012, his work entitled *The Pedagogical State of Metamorphosis* was featured in *Hail to the Destroyers* held at UBC's Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. *Warning: Use By Other Than Registered Owner Prohibited by Law* was the title of Ahadi's last solo exhibition held at Vancouver's AMS Gallery in October 2012. Ahadi is currently participating in *Ten Thousand Suns*, a group exhibition at Vancouver's Satellite Gallery.

Composed of footage drawn almost entirely from Youtube, Abbas Akhavan's projection *Ghost* consists of several personal videos that depict the initial encounter of American soldiers with their families after returning home from combat. Fading in and out of a blank white screen that isolates each homecoming, the videos are looped and projected together on the black surface of the gallery wall.

For this work, Akhavan, known for his complex installations, has compressed his reconfigurations of domesticity, architecture and human trauma into a single channel video, choosing to identify the rather private and jarring characteristics of war machines that are often conveniently left out of the image of military conflicts. Akhavan's simple yet powerful utilization of Youtube interrupts the homogenizing logic of the online service that generalizes cinematic temporalities of different qualities into quantitative visual data. By extracting the image content from Youtube's interface and placing it in a minimal frame, Akhavan invites his audience to slow down and consider trivial but important elements common in almost all videos used in the piece. The silent screen that threads these family encounters is not necessarily a transitioning device but rather an ellipsis, stimulating the imagination of what is absent.

Abbas Akhavan's practice ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video and performance. The domestic sphere—understood as a forked space between hospitality and hostility — has been an ongoing area of research in Akhavan's work. More recent works have shifted focus, wandering into spaces just outside the home — the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes. Akhavan is the recipient of Kunstpreis Berlin (2012) and Abraaj Group Art Prize (2014). He lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

In Amir Ali Ghassemi's recent video work *Meeting Her online*, the viewer is first confronted with a series of computer monitors but as the camera quickly moves closer, the face of a woman looking out from inside a computer screen fills the visual field. Except for a few moments towards the end of the video the camera stays focused on the close-up view of the woman's face, whose features have been distorted by the compression algorithm of video chat software. Desynchrony between the frame rate of the camera and the monitor causes a scanning movement that periodically darken or lighten the entire image. The ambient music used for the work's soundtrack is also created through overdubbing and hypercompressing the dialogue between the artist and the video's subject. This creates a widening space that, alongside the movements of the camera, puts a variable distance between the viewer and the subject.

The work's audio and visual surface depict three effects: first, the personification of the fragility and insubstantiality of digitally compressed objects of transmittable communication; second, the networked ontology of what has been identified in media theory as posthuman subjectivity; and third, the irrecoverable distance forever separating subjects of communication, a constitutive gap which can only now, due to its intensification by digital media, be recognized as a precondition to all human connections.

Amir Ali Ghassemi is a curator, media artist and graphic designer. He graduated in 2004 with a BA in graphic design from Azad University of Tehran. In 1998, Ghassemi founded Parkin Gallery, an independent project space in Tehran and in 2002 he set up Parkingallery.com, an online platform for young Iranian artists. Ghassemi has shown his photographs, videos and design works in various festivals and exhibitions internationally. As a curator he has organized several exhibitions, workshops and talks at Parkin Gallery. He has also been involved in a variety of projects for institutions, project spaces and universities in Germany, Netherlands, Serbia, UK, Egypt, Turkey, United States, Brazil, Canada, France, Sweden, and India. He was the guest curator for the CCBRUGGE in 2010 and recently guest programmed a video art section for 2013 Rotterdam and Goteborg film festivals.

Sohrab Kashani's video presents a fictionalized self-portrait of the artist as a superhero wherein, instead of tackling larger than human problems, he engages in the domestic and quotidian. Shot entirely indoors in Kashani's own basement apartment using a digital stop motion effect, the work depicts the modest and mundane life of its artist subject as he cooks, washes dishes, does laundry and engages with physical and digital media. The soundtrack for the piece is a homemade and western/pop rendition of the Islamic Republic of Iran's national anthem.

Two scenes from the video are notable not just for identifying Kashani as an artist but for depicting his superhero character as he moves between two different types of media objects - a book and a computer screen. In the background of the first shot, Kashani's bookshelf, particularly the prominently placed volume of Yve-Alain Bois, et. al's *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, provides a clue to his identity as an artist while the Farsi translation of a Harry Potter volume in his hands in the foreground suggests his desire for transcending the everyday life and transforming into a true superhero. In the second shot, Kashani sits down in front of his computer screen and logs into Facebook, scrolling down his superhero page and monitoring the 'likes' and 'comments' he has received from friends and followers. These two similar scenes identify the inseparable acts of *showing* and *seeing* as the biotechnological means of virtualization versus *writing* and *reading* as the logical prerequisites of imagination.

Sohrab Kashani is a multidisciplinary artist and independent curator based in Tehran. His work has been exhibited at numerous exhibitions and festivals worldwide. Kashani founded and runs Sazmanab Platform for Contemporary Arts, an independent non-profit art space in Tehran and Lost in Teh(e)ran, an Iranian video data bank and curatorial bursary.

Gelare Khoshgozaran's split screen video constructs a visually disturbing talking head by vertically combining two different faces that otherwise seem to be in a face-to-face dialogue. The top portion of the screen shows the upper part of Khoshgozaran's features while she reads passages from Lacan's "The Signification of the Phallus." The bottom half of the screen shows the lower part of a female white face while she listens to Khoshgozaran's speech and interrupts its flow with her own "proper" enunciation of the words she deems to have been pronounced incorrectly; she insists on hearing their proper articulation before letting Khoshgozaran continue with her reading.

Speech couples its bifurcated screen and continuous soundtrack with Khoshgozaran's skillful revelation and concealment of the subtle racial and sexual tensions between the work's two female subjects. By doing so, it points toward a more fundamental issue: the overlapping of the political and technological functions of language. However, the work does more than illuminate the power of language in establishing an authoritative relationship between two subjects engaged in a conversation. It also identifies the linguistic rigidities enforced by 'authors' common to a wide range of social, and physical technologies as barriers designed to obstruct the free transformation of thinking into text and reading into speech. The work shows why even a minimal fluctuation in the proper utilization of language can both threaten the technological authority of language in the space of communication and question those who benefit from its strictly rule-based use. The work also identifies the unexpected modification of linguistic patterns as a way for thinking and reason to escape and remain a step ahead of machinic intelligence.

Gelare Khoshgozaran is an artist, independent scholar and translator based in Los Angeles. Born in 1986 in Tehran, Iran, she received her BFA in photography from the University of Arts in Tehran and moved to Los Angeles in 2009 to join the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of Southern California. Since graduation Gelare has contributed to multiple Persian and English magazines, journals and websites, including *Parkett*, *Mardomak* and *Wild Gender* as art and cultural critic. She is currently a contributor of *ZanNegaar Journal of Women Studies*, the first of its kind published in Persian by the Institute for the War and Peace Reporting. Gelare has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions throughout the U.S, Canada, Europe and the Middle East. She was the winner of the Neely Macomber Travel Award in 2011 and ArtGenève's Metal Young Art Critic Award in 2013.

Each frame of Tala Madani's three short animations, which depict men in humorous and compromised situations, is painted with oil on wood and erased from the painted surface after being captured with the camera. By taking advantage of certain affinities between painting and moving image Madani invents a new visual technique for thinking about feminist subjectivity.

Rather than disrupting the cognitive relationship between viewers and the realist essence of moving image, in her media synthesis of cinema and painting Madani takes advantage of humans' normative perception of the passage of time in space to augment the material logic of painting with her own surreal imagination about the idiosyncrasies of the world of men. Preserved by digital video, the movement of paint on the surface of the screen allows Madani to remain present in the work, ensuring that her manipulation of cinema's logic and those of animation and painting goes beyond a mere commentary about the overlapping domains of human and machinic perception. The work's ephemeral surface becomes an opportunity to suggest ways in which masculinity, both in its Iranian specificity and its wider and global universality, can be discussed from a critically humorous perspective.

Tala Madani is a Los Angeles-based painter, whose work is characterized by loose expressive brushwork rendered in a bold, distinctive palette. Rich in narrative and heavy in irony Madani's paintings depict darkly comic mise-en-scènes. After receiving her MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2006, Madani made her solo debut in 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include *Rip Image*, Moderna Museet Malmö & Stockholm (2013); *The Jinn*, Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2011) and *Manual Man*, Pilar Corrias, London (2011). Group exhibitions have included The Future Generation Art Prize@Venice 2013; Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice (2013); *New works 13.1*, Artpace, San Antonio (2013); *No Borders*, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol (2013); *He disappeared into complete silence; rereading a single artwork by Louise Bourgeois*, Museum De Hallen, Amsterdam (2011); *Speech Matters*, Danish Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venice (2011) and *The Great New York*, P.S. 1 MoMA, New York (2010).

The name of Raha Raissnia's abstract 16mm black and white film references a neighborhood in Northern Tehran that is known for its poor and more traditional inhabitants who live very differently from their wealthy neighbours in the mountainous surrounding areas. The etymology of the name *Chaleh Harz* relates to the neighborhood's location in a valley whose streets were historically used as repositories for sewage.

Like much of her other film works, *Chaleh Harz* demonstrates Raissnia's commitment to synthesizing cinema with the older technologies of single image production, namely photography and drawing. It constructs a new developmental trajectory towards a new critical position for digital graphics away from their self-righteous claim to a truthful relationships with the real world or factual data. The artist's vision of moving abstraction has the potential of liberating the realm of aesthetics from the obligation to make any sense, opening the door to a truly accelerationist aesthetics. Her vision functions like a rebellion from within the field of aesthetics, staging a revolt clearly aimed at changing the rules of the interfacial prison of images, if not altogether escaping its bounds.

Raha Raissnia emigrated from Iran to the United States in 1983. She received her B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 and her M.F.A. from the Pratt Institute in 2002. From 1992 to 1995, between her two degrees, Raissnia worked as an intern and a full time employee at Anthology Film Archives in New York, a time that she describes as being "directly formative years" for her exposure and knowledge of avant-garde cinema as well as for the paintings she made during this period. In all of her gallery exhibitions and in various configurations she has presented elements of each of the three areas of her practice: painting, drawing and filmmaking. She is represented by Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York, Galerie Xippas in Paris and Gallery Marta Cervera in Madrid.

Anahita Razmi's installation describes a virtual city named after a portmanteau that identifies the Iranian neighbourhoods of Los Angeles. The work consists of three video monitors and a book through which real and fictional materials about Tehran and Los Angeles, as well as the artist's own performance as a news anchor, are utilized to expand the territory of Tehrangeles from a particular ethnic enclave in Los Angeles to a universal urban utopia. Razmi's performance, which consists of her reading the opening passage of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, has been recorded against a standard green video screen used for replacing the background of video recordings with other still or moving images. Her book contains more than 200 news headlines pertaining to the everyday and locally specific news from Tehran and Los Angeles in which the artist has replaced all references to both cities with Tehrangeles.

Like Dickens's own historical comparison between Paris and London, *A Tale of Tehrangeles* succeeds by reminding the viewer of the slight chance for the meeting of two very different cities while at the same time examining their differences and similarities; in these cities the revolution either has already had a traumatic ending or is practically impossible. The production logic of Razmi's installation in constructing her city is mechanical; the footage from the two cities is selected not based on meaningful relations but visual resemblances. Similarly, a simple computer program could have easily constructed the headlines in her book of news. The artist's humorous take on two opposing geocultural identities acts like a soluble substance that slowly erodes the cities' differences and reveals the flattened reality of the everyday life in two very different political contexts.

Anahita Razmi is a video and performance artist based in Stuttgart, Germany. Her recent solo and group exhibitions include *Swing State*, Kunstverein Hannover (2013); *Automatic Assembly Actions*, Carbon12 Dubai (2013); *Frischzelle_17: Anahita Razmi*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2012); *Bucharest Biennale 5: Tactics for the Here and Now* (2012); *Videonale 13*, Kunstmuseum, Bonn, Germany (2011); *Make - Believe - Remake*, Kunstverein Friedrichshafen, Germany (2011); *The State: Social? Antisocial?*, Traffic, Dubai (2011). In 2010 Razmi received a work stipend from the Edith Russ Site for Media Art, Germany for her work *The Paykan Project*, in 2011 she was awarded The Emdash Award (Frieze Foundation, London) for her project *Roof Piece Tehran*.

Nooshin Rostami's mobile sculpture consists of all the constitutive parts of a recently defunct iPhone that she had accidentally dropped into water. The work is not simply made from the components of a telecomputational device but its creation was itself facilitated by the use of computers and the Internet. Only after buying proper tools online and watching Youtube videos was Rostami able to dismantle the device. The construction of this work also involved researching the history of mobile sculptures, in particular the works of Alexander Calder. Rostami has paid close attention not only to the overall look of the piece but its placement in the space of the gallery. The work's interplay with direct lighting creates infinite shadow possibilities, opening up her mobile to the relationship it produces between the flat image of the movement of a multidimensional object in a three-dimensional space. It generates an organic live cinema in which it is impossible to separate the real from its representation.

In the lectures that he later formalized into *Cinema I*, Deleuze makes some categorical distinctions between what he calls 'the mechanical' versus 'the machinic.' According to him, mechanical devices are characterized by their organizational closure whereas machinic apparatus operate on the basis of their structural openness. Deleuze's mechanical entities often consist of abstracted parts that are useless unless incorporated within a particular configuration. For him, machines, made either of matter or memory, are neither mechanically structured nor temporally synchronic. Instead, they consist of diachronic parts each capable of autonomous activities that fit into a larger operation. Telecomputational machines occupy a flexible place between these two categories. While their intelligent operations depend on the subordination of their mechanical materiality to the machinic logic of their software and electronic interface, any serious malfunctioning can immediately reduce them to the useless and abstracted ruins of a mechanical apparatus. The sudden death of Rostami's mobile phone resembles this ruinous operation. Thus, the artist's construction of the mobile sculpture functions as a literal transformation of the abstracted parts of a mechanical object back into an open machine, albeit a different kind.

Nooshin Rostami is a New York-based artist. She received her BA in graphic design from the University of Art in Tehran in 2009, and her MFA from Brooklyn College (CUNY) in 2011. Rostami has exhibited her work in Iran and the United States. She presented her work at *Iranian Art: Self Exile, Self Censorship*, held during the 47th Annual Comparative Literature Conference at the California State University, Long Beach. In 2012, she was invited to do a solo performance at Flux Factory in Queens, New York.

Reza Negarestani is a writer and philosopher based in Connecticut who has pioneered the genre of 'theory-fiction' with his expansive *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*. He has written widely online and in print on contemporary theory, philosophy and politics, notably in journals like *Collapse* and *CTheory*. He is currently working on two books, *Beyond the Wall of the State* (co-authored with Manabrata Guha) and *The Mortiloquist*.

Mohammad Salemy is an independent Vancouver-based critic and curator from Iran. He has curated exhibitions at the Koerner Gallery and AMS Gallery at the University of British Columbia, as well as the Satellite Gallery and Dadabase. He co-curated *Faces* exhibition at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. Salemy holds a masters degree in Critical and Curatorial Studies from the University of British Columbia.